

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

audience. Mass meetings or marches were often organized. Political adversaries were mercilessly criticized. Tudeh henchmen regularly attacked meetings of hostile organizations or persons known for their enmity to Communism. Strikes, often for purely political reasons, were organized, and special anniversary days, normally those connected with official Soviet holidays, were noisily celebrated,

It was typical of the party that to swell its ranks it accepted the collaboration of virtually anyone who wished to cooperate. A few examples may be cited here. During one of the roundups by the Anglo-Soviet forces of those suspected of fifth column pro-German activities, a young editor by the name of Tafazzoli was arrested.

Tafazzoli edited an independent liberal paper, *Iran-i-Ma*, which was known for its pure nationalism and which was, therefore, implicitly anti-British and anti-Soviet in character. On some occasions it openly criticized the Tudeh,⁴⁴ although, in line with most Iranian newspapers before the oil crisis, it did not attack Russia directly. Upon his arrest Tafazzoli was sent to the Soviet prison at Resht. There a notable transformation took place in his political philosophy. Released after some months of captivity, Tafazzoli gradually reoriented his newspaper into a pro-Soviet organ. By the time of the oil crisis, which was the decisive test of the patriotism of the Iranian press, *Iran-i-Ma* unswervingly went on record as favoring Soviet demands.

Another example was Qavam as-Saltaneh. A wealthy latifundist from the north, Qavam was Prime Minister in 1942 until the bread riots at Christmas time forced his resignation in

January, 1943. For a short time thereafter he remained politically inactive, but when the Freedom Front was created, Qavam emerged as its supporter. In the light of his postwar record it is not quite clear what motivated Qavam. Some have said that it was his desire to protect his property in the Soviet zone that prompted him to play the game with the

Afo, July 5, 1943, wrote: "When the Soviets entered Iran, many wealthy Iranians fled to the south. But many put on the mask of Communism. Such were Abbas and Soleiman Iskandari. They raised red standards and proclaimed themselves defenders of the people. They created the Tudeh party. When Abbas Iskandari embezzled some funds, he fled to America. Such is the Tudeh party of Iran!"